



Office of the Commissioners

• Michael J. Washo • Corey D. O'Brien • A.J. Munchak •

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For Immediate Release

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Commissioners Sponsor High School Recycling Competition

Scranton, PA – Lackawanna County Commissioners Michael J. Washo, Corey D. O'Brien and A.J. Munchak, in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Professional Recyclers of Pennsylvania, are sponsoring a five-week recycling competition called "Greensylvania" between Dunmore High School and Scranton High School. A kick-off for the competition, which starts September 29, 2008, was held today at Dunmore High School.

"We are proud to sponsor this event – the first of its kind in Pennsylvania – as a way to encourage our young people to recycle," Commissioners Washo and O'Brien said. "As Commissioners, we believe conservation starts in communities like ours. That's why we are making efforts within county government to reduce consumption and increase recycling. Our support of Greensylvania is an extension of that commitment."

Students, staff and faculty will participate in the competition to see which school can recycle the most school and office paper per capita. The best hint to competitors: If it is paper you can write on, recycle it! An awards ceremony for the event will be held on Friday, November 14, 2008 to coincide with America Recycles Day on Saturday, November 15, 2008.

"At the state level, we are working to develop county-wide recycling education programs like the Greensylvania initiative so that all of our citizens, residents and businesses get the same message about recycling throughout the Commonwealth," said Carl Hursh, Waste Reduction and Recycling, DEP.

Greensylvania is an outgrowth of national RecycleMania competitions on college campuses that started in 2001. Under RecycleMania, schools collect data on recycling and trash over a 10-week period. Schools are ranked in various categories such as largest amount of recyclables per capita, largest amount of total recyclables, least amount of trash per capita and highest recycling rate. Last year, 400 colleges and universities participated in the popular event including 80 in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania now has more participating schools than any other state.

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“RecycleMania has generated a tremendous amount of excitement around the country,” said Donna McGowan, Contracting Officer for the Office of Policy and Management for the Environmental Protection Agency Region 3. “We thought, if you can do it on college campuses, why not have a high school competition? We looked for a location, and Lackawanna County stepped up and agreed to sponsor the pilot program.”

The local high school competition is a pilot program for EPA’s Region 3, which includes Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia and Washington, D.C. While schools within the same school district have held similar competitions, this is the first competition between schools in different school districts. Organizers will document the event with the hope of involving more schools in the future.

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